



## MELBOURNE SCHOOL GIRL NAMED AS YOUNG CARER WINNER IN VICTORIAN STATE FINALS

**30 November 2015 (Victoria):** *Life Without Barriers and Carers Australia have announced the*

**Epping resident Auraria Steele has been selected as the Victorian winner in the Young Carer category in the state finals of the National Carer Awards.**

Auraria Steele is a confident young lady who has had some amazing challenges in her life.

Living at home with her Mum Christine and her sister Imyjen, she has worked tirelessly to help care for her sister. At just 18 months apart, they are very close and have a unique understanding that gives them an extraordinary bond and it goes both ways.

“Even though Imyjen is non-verbal you can tell she cares for Auraria above anything else.”

Imyjen lives with a muscle condition – Schwartz–Jampel syndrome - so needs lots of day to day support and is limited with her movement.

Auraria’s dedication to the needs of her sister has meant she often forgoes her own interests to spend time with her, which is a tremendous support to her mother who is the primary carer.

While Auraria has her own life and school and other interests as a young person, she readily stays home with her sister so Christine can go shopping or do a quick errand.

Even as a young girl, Auraria has been keen to advocate for other carers and has been part of the local young siblings group. At the age of 14, along with her Mum and other carers, she met with a minister and confidently asked questions about how the government planned to provide more support for people living with disabilities.

When she finishes school, her current interest is in going into teaching – her mum says she believes she has great compassion, learning flexibility and empathy.

Her honesty, maturity, kindness, adaptability and advocacy for both herself and others all seem to come from her caring for her sister during these early years.

Auraria said it’s a huge honour to be recognised for everyday life and every carer deserves to be acknowledged. She said she enjoys talking to other carers because she often experiences loneliness and isolation and it’s only the other young carers who really understand.

In her younger years she got quite burnt out and exhausted from all the extra work that caring entails.

But she says even though her sister can't really express her feelings, her face lights up when she walks in and that is such an amazing feeling and makes it all worthwhile.

Christine said Auraria is a positive role model for the younger kids. Although caring seems like a really big task it's one you can take on with a smile and still achieve things on your own.